

GIUSEPPE PENONE

GERMINAZIONE (GERMINATION)

**Opening Sunday 1st December from 11 am to 5 pm
Until 30 March 2014**

In the 2009 exhibition at Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea – “In the Hands. Works from 1968 to 2008” – the artist brought together a series of works with the aim of rendering intelligible the processes that had generated them, where the hand was the common denominator of all the works on show.

In the present exhibition “Germinazione” Giuseppe Penone underscores another cornerstone of his *modus operandi*: “*In the emptiness of a branch snatched from the mud I traced my hands, fingers, imprint upon imprint. Imprints raised from the ground.*”

The works on show, in acrylic resin, make this process exactly visible to us, a process which originates from the negative imprint of a trunk or a branch in the mud, an imprint into which the artist has pressed his own hands and where, in the development of its positive (the sculpture), the superimposition of imprint upon imprint gives rise to Germination.

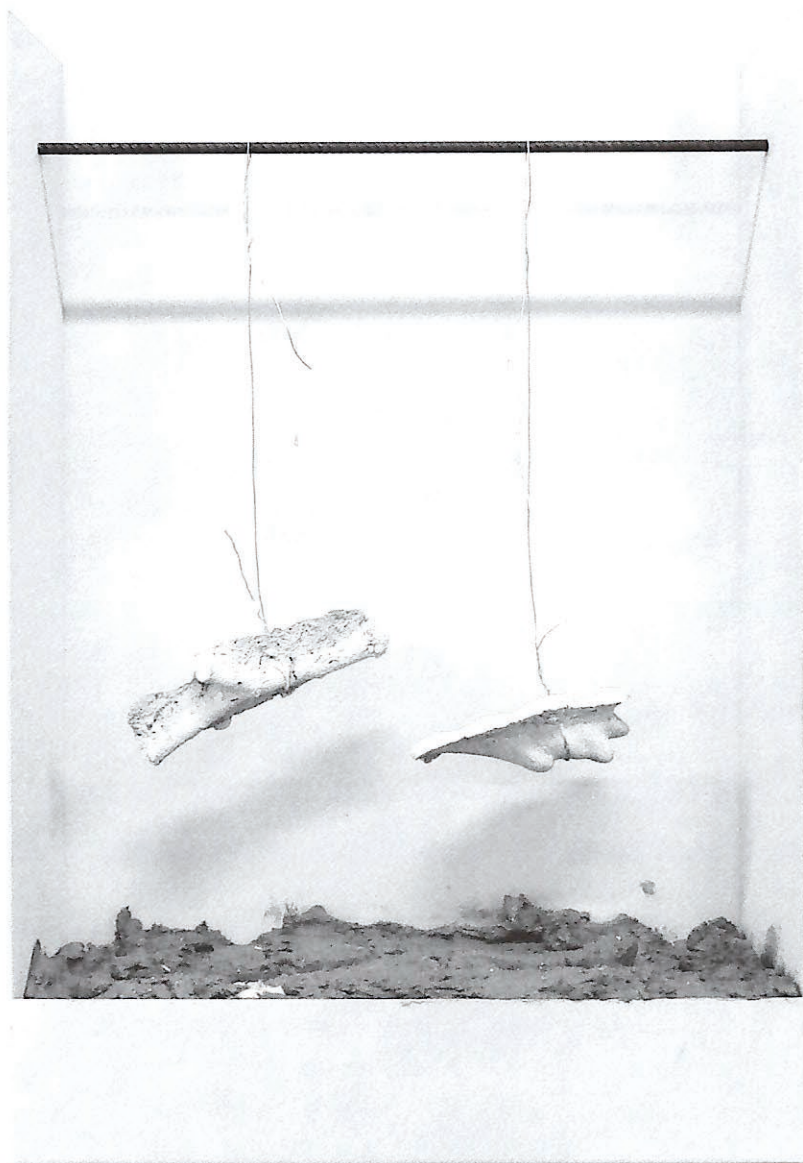
Interpretation of these works is inseparable from the 1968 “Progetto per vasca nel ruscello” (Design for bath in a stream): “*An image put forward by Giuseppe Penone in 1968 found a specific realisation on the bed of a stream, where the body of man indicates the measure of space. Today we see that other forms and other figures render the human presence visible when it follows the trace of trees, branches and stones. Man, water, wind and forest are once more combined: water softens the earth that accommodates the body; wind hardens the earth that preserves its imprint.*” (Laurent Busine in the catalogue for “Giuseppe Penone: Germinazione”, 2013).

The artist wanted this exhibition to be accompanied by a publication of his own devising – “Giuseppe Penone: Germinazione” – edited by the artist himself and Laurent Busine, director of the Musée des Arts Contemporains du Grand-Hornu which, in 2010, hosted a large exhibition by Penone. This publication is part of a series “in progress”, already preceded by two others, one for the exhibition “Giuseppe Penone: le Corps d’un jardin” by Marian Goodman in 2013 and one for the exhibition “Penone Versailles” at the Château de Versailles the same year.

GIUSEPPE PENONE

GERMINAZIONE

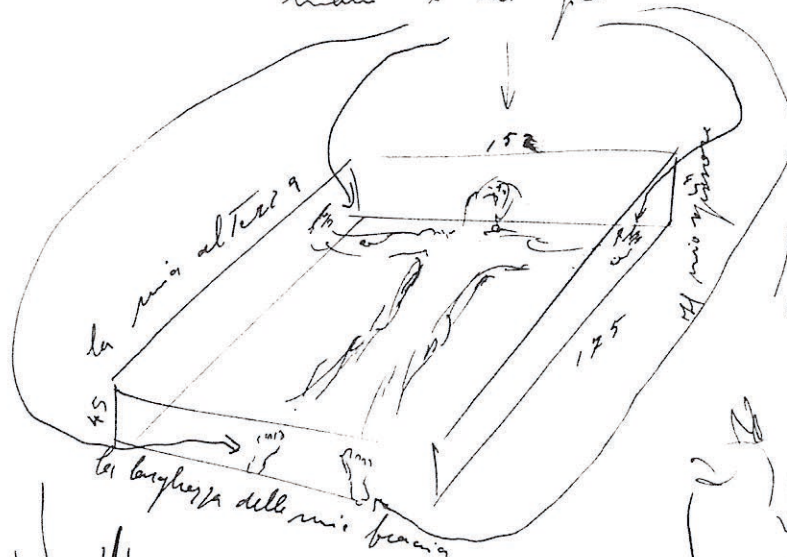




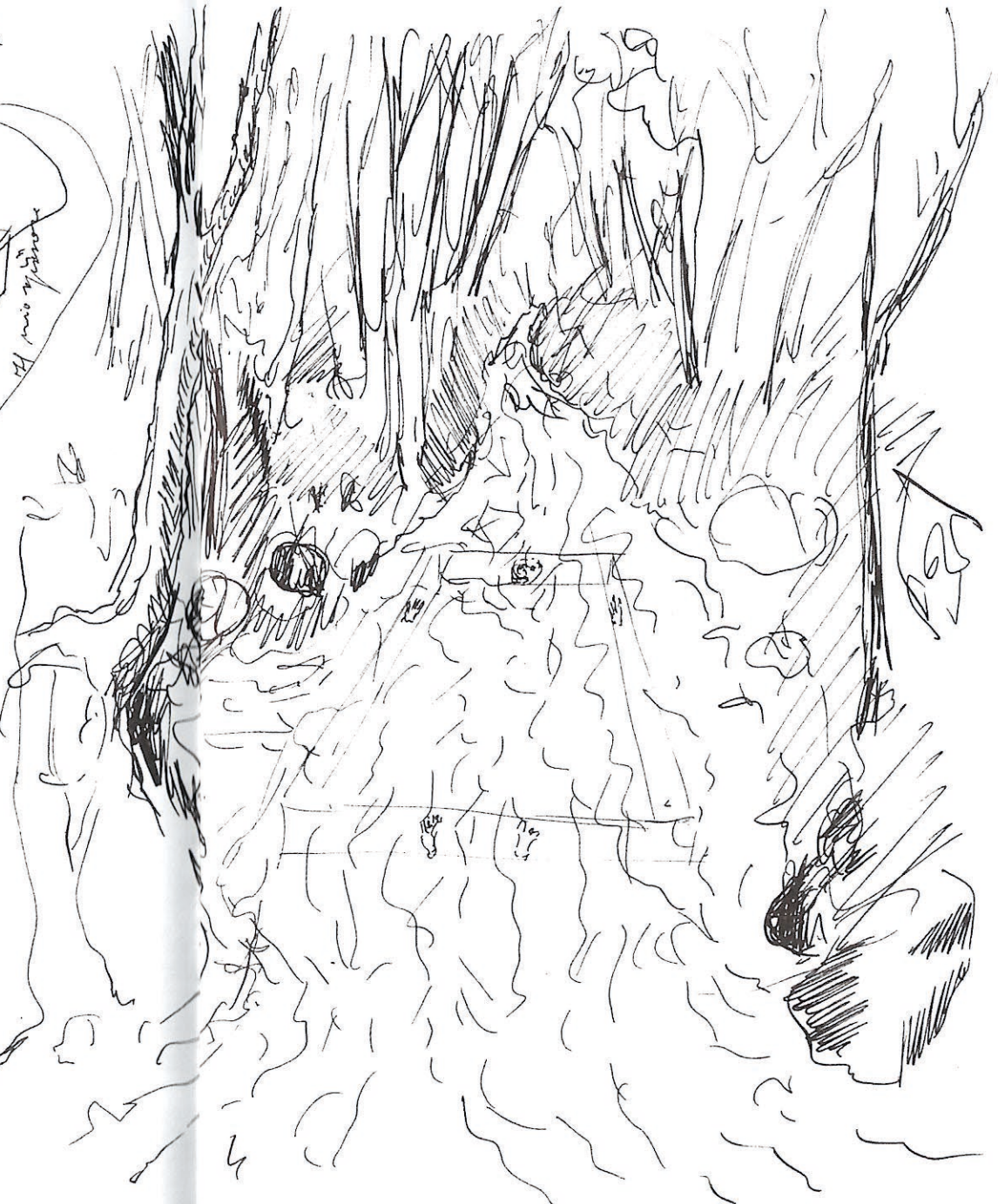
To make a sculpture,
the sculptor must settle down on the ground,
letting himself slip down slowly,
softly and little by little.
Then, stretched out, he can concentrate his attention
and the forces upon his body
which, pressed against the earth,
allows him to see and feel earthy things;
then he can stretch out his arms to delight fully
in the coolness of the ground
and achieve the degree of calm required
to produce the sculpture.
His immobility at this point becomes
the most evident and active condition;
every movement, every thought,
every desire for movement is superfluous
and undesirable in the state of calm
and of slow sinking without tiring convulsions
and words and artificial movements
which would only succeed in jarring
one from the condition happily arrived at.
The sculptor penetrates...
and the line of the horizon comes nearer to him.
When, finally, he feels literally light-headed,
the cold of the earth cuts him in half
and enables him to see quite clearly
and precisely the point which divides
the part of his body which belongs
to the emptiness of the sky and the part
which belongs to the fullness of the earth.
This is when sculpture comes into being.

G. P. 1968

La parte del viso delle
mani e dei piedi



La vasca in cemento fonda
nel ruscello vera-piccola
dell'acqua che ripete in parte
la forma del mio volto, delle
mie mani e dei miei piedi
ed a poco a poco si riempira
di sabbia



Progetto per vasca nel ruscello Guff. Tenore 1968

darkness... lack of all light, total obscurity, absolute dark, dense, tangible.

At a depth of one thousand metres into the earth, in the absence of light, space becomes matter, the darkness compresses the body and the darkness triggered by the contact of a hand with a surface is the same as the darkness that surrounds the hand.

root... part of the vascular plants that penetrates into the earth with the function of support and the absorption of food, the lowest part, the foot, the foundations, origin, cause, initial stroke, fundamental part.

The glance of a man buried at a depth of seven hundred metres in the tunnels of a mine, perceptible terminal of a root of our economy, brought to light and spread over the surface of the world, makes us understand how we feed.

soil... surface of the terrestrial crust, incoherent and friable material, made up of detritus of rocks or other, which covers part of the terrestrial surface and contains the elements necessary for the nutrition of plants.

Dust of a universal matter that covers and covers again the existences of which it is formed.

to be... infinitive of a verb which, used as verbal predicate, in an absolute sense, affirms the existence, the essence in itself but also the effective presence of someone or something, or it serves to declare the reality and the true nature of a fact, the existing, the condition, the state of an existence. Existence is expressed by presence, by the volume of a body, by the imprints left which cancel and are cancelled out by other imprints.

imprint... a sign left by pressing or tracing.

The evident trace of an action, of a gesture, or the result of a pressure brought about by a force exerted or undergone by a body. The imprint of a stone on the ground, of a branch, of grass crushed by a step, superimposed on the trace of a foot, a hand, a body, a face.

gesture... movement of the body, in particular the head or hand, which often accompanies the word to express a thought or desire.

It becomes a lasting expression if its trace remains. Fixing the gestures of an existence, occupying space with the presence of one's own experience, leaving in a material the imprint of an action, this becomes sculpture. One being which encloses the action of its existence within its body is the tree. Its lived experience is visible in its structure.

body... every portion of matter which occupies a space, the main part, the most compact and consistent nucleus of something.

The physical part of our existence, the weight of matter that accompanies our life continually underscores the force of gravity that anchors us to the ground and determines and limits our movements, our gestures.

gravity... the property of bodies to fall vertically to the ground, dignity of bearing, solemnity.

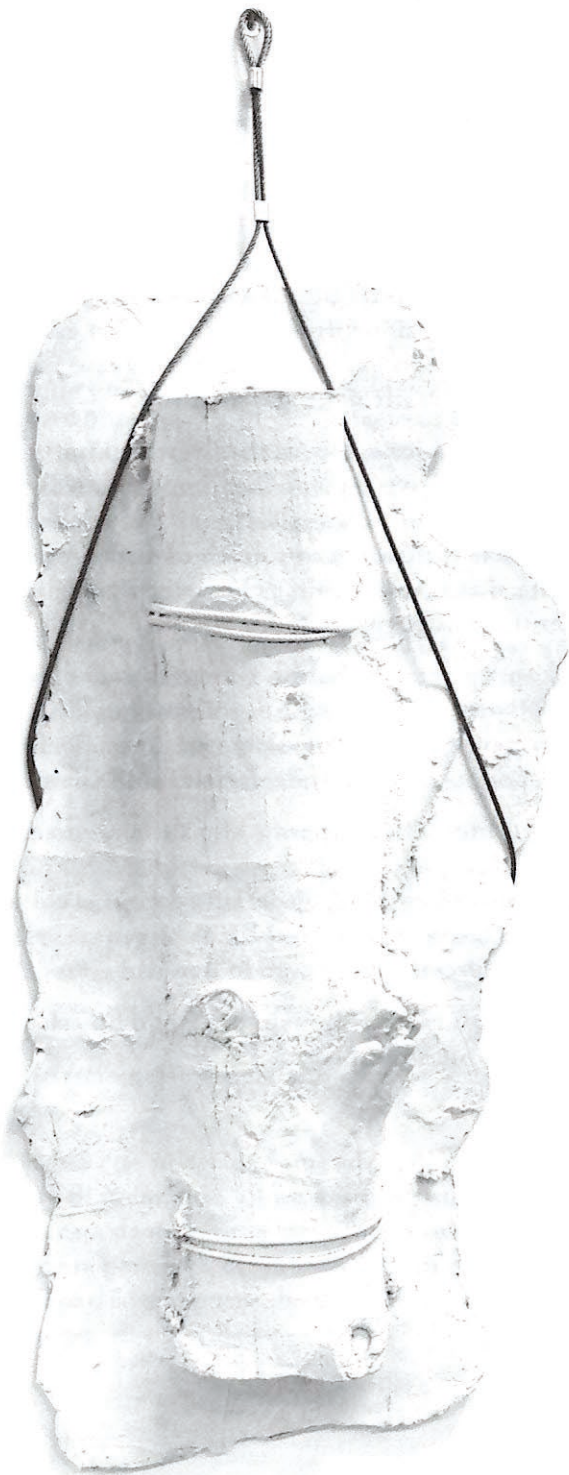
To weigh, to burden a surface with one's weight, unites us with an extraneous body, makes us part of a whole.

adherence... a force that opposes the slipping of two bodies that are in contact.

Freeing our body from our continual adherence to the ground is the necessity of existing and is that which generates the sensation of vitality we feel in observing the movement of a gesture.

In the emptiness of a branch snatched from the mud I traced my hands, fingers, imprint upon imprint.
Imprints raised from the ground.

G. P. 2008





The weight of leaves on branches
will be raised by the wind.

The weight of man on the ground
will be raised by branches.

The weight of the wind will be raised by man

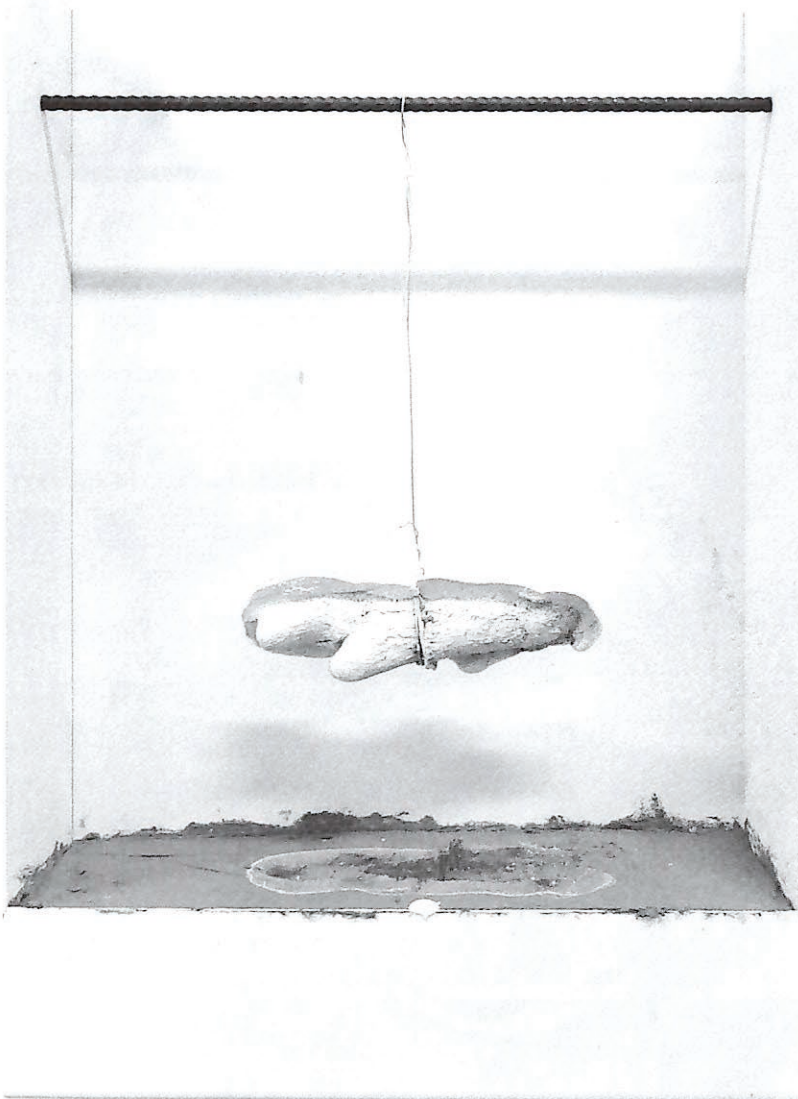
who incorporates the wind, sinks into the ground
and germinates in the branches.

With a steel cable I raise the weight of man,
of leaves, of the wind.

With a steel cable I raise the weight
of the gestures of a man.

G. P. September 2013





This publication grew out of an idea by Giuseppe Penone
on the occasion of the exhibition:
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Editors

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G.P. and L.B.

My thanks to Laurent Busine
for his professionalism and knowledge of Art,
to Dina Carrara and to Giuseppe Penone,
whom I met in 1969 and
who I am honoured to have still at my side today,
personally and with his works.

A.T.R.

Thought is not an immobile thing at risk
of drying up.

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of a stream, where the body of man indicates the
measure of space. Today we see that other forms
and other figures render the human presence
visible when it follows the trace of trees, branches
and stones. Man, water, wind and forest are
once more combined: water softens the earth
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the earth that preserves its imprint.

L.B.